

# BEIJING TODAY

## COMMERCE



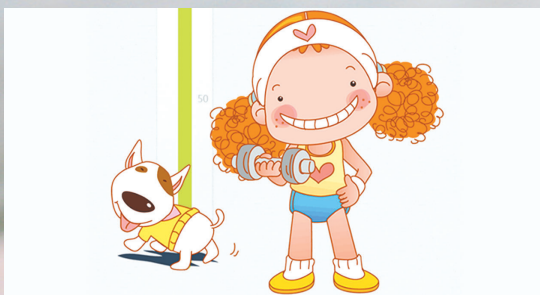
MARCH 28, 2014 • No. 668 • PUBLISHED BI-WEEKLY • CN11-0120 • ¥ 3.00 (METRO & COMMERCE)

# Beijing in full bloom

With the opening of the Yulan magnolias, spring is officially here! This is the season for outdoor sports and trips to the city's beautiful urban parks and royal gardens.

We've rounded up the capital's best locations for flower watching and amateur photography in this week's issue.

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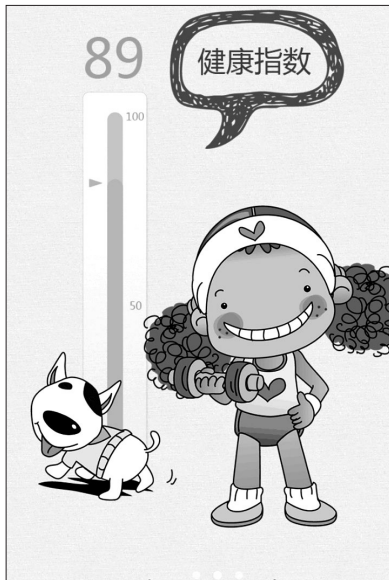


## German quintet plays Mozart tribute

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# Gulu app gameifies walking the dog



BY BAO CHENGRONG  
Beijing Today Staff

Pet owners who need a bit of extra motivation to keep up their dog's exercise regimen can check out Gulu, a new app attempting to gameify dog maintenance.

The user's dog is represented with a cartoon image that shows its miles walked and pounds of food eaten. Icons change according to the dog's achievements.

Owners can share photos of their pets with other dog owners and find exercise partners based on their geographic location.

What sets Gulu apart from similar dog monitoring platforms like Swifto and Whistle is the customized recommendation system. Gulu recommends a suitable exercise duration for each dog based on its breed and weight, as well as on the day's temperature and air quality.

Gulu uses the smartphone's accelerometer to monitor a user's stride length and gives data about each exercise session. Food intake is measured in rice bowls to show the calories consumed and used during each session.

The program also reminds owners to carry a leash, a bag for collecting poop and the dog's license. But fun is just one part.

Cui Junpeng, founder of Gulu, plans to expand the app into a community for dogs and their owners. Gulu already includes a private social community like Path where friends can share photos of their pet dogs and discuss how to deal with a pet's depression or shedding.

Cui also plans to copy the concept of "territories" for dogs currently seen in the app Woof.

Woof, a social networking tool for dog owners created in Hamilton, Canada, allows users to search for nearby parks, track their walks and pin their dog's "territories."

The networking aspect would help owners to find other dogs that are the same breed and make friends with their owners, Cui says.



## 'Baby blog' lands on the domestic market

By BAO CHENGRONG  
Beijing Today Staff

Timehut, a popular app for recording child growth, recently entered the domestic market.

Created by Peekapoo Moments, Timehut has been online since December 2012. The app uses a timeline format to display photos, videos and recordings of its users' babies. The software uses file information from the phone to place photos and videos at the time they were recorded instead of at the time they were uploaded.

The app currently has 200,000 users, 30 percent of whom are from mainland China and 50 percent of whom are from Taiwan.

Liu Jie, Timehut's founder, said 90 percent of the content is submitted by mothers. Fathers are more likely to frequently check for new photos.

The company estimates that its product is used by 30 percent of Taiwan's parents. It receives more than 30,000 photos each day.

To encourage users to spend more time in the app, Timehut launched its own social media platform. The community draws contacts from a user's WeChat account and address book.

The company's biggest problem with moving to China has been bandwidth, Liu said.

The traffic generated while browsing photos and videos has been far higher than they expected and far higher than their bandwidth used for receiving new content. Liu said the company has hired two engineers from Tencent and Sohu Video to solve the problem.

One of the functions most likely to attract users on the mainland is the app's recommendation system. Mothers from the mainland are recommended to connect with a mother in Taiwan.

Liu said Taiwan's moms have more experience in raising children and are very active on the platform.

Additionally, most mainland users prefer to interact with people who are very far away since it allows them to worry less about privacy.



# English school business increasingly shady

By BAO CHENGRONG  
Beijing Today Staff

English training schools are under fire for denying the existence of refund policies, price gouging and hiring unqualified, illegal aliens.

Among the 1,644 complaints filed against schools during the first half of 2012, some 60 percent concerned the difficulty of obtaining a refund, according to a report on the rights of education consumers by Sohu website.

APTECH, one of the training schools surveyed, claimed to offer a full refund to students who requested one within their first 12 class hours. However, the school reportedly denied the existence of this policy and refused to disclose it to students who asked for a refund.

Web International English has been accused of similar tactics.

A former client surnamed Yang said he was disappointed with the school. When he found that the class content did not match its high tuition fee, Yang applied to drop the class.

Web International English refused to issue a refund, saying it would adjust his class schedule instead. When he demanded a refund a second time, he was told no refund was available and it would



cost an additional 1,500 yuan to change to teachers.

At Xueda Education, the class contract includes a clause nullifying the client's right to a refund or arbitration. Customers who continue to fight usually need more than a month to make any progress.

Many of the schools employ a dedicated sales team to sway clients. The salesmen have been accused of upselling classes and tricking parents into buying unsuitable packages priced as high as 40,000 yuan.

Sales consultants at Wall Street English are required to sell more than 150,000 yuan of class time per month. Salesmen who fail to meet their target for three months are fired.

Other schools have no fixed prices, setting the price of a class on the spot after learning the parents' income level. A junior level class at Wall Street English that teaches basic English, such as how to read a menu or book a hotel, has been quoted as costing 32,800 yuan.

Xueda Education often posts extraordinarily high class prices and offers discounts to attract customers.

Many of the organizations boast having foreign teachers, but few of these teachers have any training as educators or the necessary certifications to be legally employed in China.

## Overseas schools vie to win young Chinese students

By BAO CHENGRONG  
Beijing Today Staff

Chinese students have been heading abroad for high school and college for several decades. Now they are heading abroad for kindergarten.

Elementary schools in the US, UK, Canada and Singapore are competing for a slice of China's lucrative education market by recruiting students as young as three years old.

Canada was the first to open its door to Chinese kindergarten students last year. Accepted students live on campus in the schools' training centers.

Boarding schools in Britain are also trying to win Chinese youth. At the last International Education Expo, the boarding schools said they were seeking similarly young children.

For most parents, sending their children abroad at such a young age is terrifying. Schools in Singapore are trying to relieve some of that fear by allowing mothers to accompany their children.

Cost is another concern. The annual cost of studying at a British kindergarten, including food and accommodation, is more than £ 20,000 (204,800 yuan).



Foreign kindergartens are seeking a slice of China's education market. CFP Photo

Most of the foreign kindergartens and primary schools require the toddlers to take an entrance exam. So far, they have been less popular with Chinese parents than middle schools.

The number of Chinese students studying at private high schools in the US has grown from 65 in 2006 to 23,795 in 2013, according to a recent report on overseas study carried out by United States Department of Homeland Security.

Australia's Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) issued a new policy to open more of the country's middle schools to Chinese students last Saturday.

The policy simplified Australia's five-level system used to measure visa risk to three levels. Prospective students must have completed elementary school in China and show cash reserves capable of covering a year's fixed costs.

The number of Chinese students study-

ing at middle schools in Australia surpassed 3,000 last year, a 10 percent increase from 2012, according to the Australian Embassy.

But the perils are obvious.

The Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles has said that many young students suffered from physical and mental problems while abroad. Chinese children typically have poor emotional development and weak time management skills, leading many to skip class, become involved in sexual relationships and spend irrationally.

Chang Xiaoli said young students who want to study abroad need better training before they leave China. Learning the language of their host country is only one step: they should also understand the culture of the country or region in which they plan to study.

Chang said frequent communication with their parents is especially important.

Not every young child is suitable for studying abroad at a young age, said Cheng Jiakai, vice director of the overseas study service center at Ministry of Education.

Parents need to think carefully about the high cost and their child's ability to adapt to a new environment, he said.

And more importantly, whether their child even wants to study abroad.



# Landscape architecture shows a different Switzerland

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

YUAN Space is presenting "The Swiss Touch in Landscape Architecture," an exhibition curated by renowned architecture professor Michael Jakob this March and April. The exhibition provides insight into the richness and variety of Swiss landscape architecture.

Switzerland has played an essential role in the evolution of landscape architecture since the 20th century. Projects led by Swiss landscape architects can be found in Switzerland and around the world.

Through the information panels and documentary films on exhibition, visitors can learn more about the origin of landscape architecture, the important function of national exhibitions, the top architectural firms and the landmark works of the latest generation of landscape architects.

Although the field is mostly unknown to the public, exhibition organizers said urban planning and ecological context is becoming more and more important – especially in cities like Beijing.

Curator Michael Jakob is a professor of the history and theory of landscape at Geneva and professor of comparative literature at Grenoble University. He is also a visiting professor at Harvard University.

Jakob has taught in several Swiss, Italian, French, American and Spanish universities. His teaching and research focus on landscape theory, aesthetics, vertigo, contemporary theories of perception and the poetics of architecture.

The exhibition is supported by architect Guido Hager, the first landscape gardener and student of landscape architecture at the University of Applied Sci-



Guido Hager

ences in Rapperswil. After graduating, Hager set up his own office for landscape architecture and worked as a part-time assistant at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich.

His most recent projects include the Pestalozzi Park in Zurich, the Rudolf Bednar Park in Vienna, the Public Park in Tripoli, the park of the University of Zurich as well as New Rhine River Promenade.

This exhibition was created by The Swiss Arts Council and conceived by Laboratoire Chôros with support from the Embassy of Switzerland. The exhibition was previously shown in France, Spain, Ireland, Switzerland and the US.

The Swiss Torch will move on to Shanghai and Suzhou after Beijing, with a lecture to be held in Hangzhou. In



Photos provided by Pro Helvetia

April, Pro Helvetia Shanghai will also organize several design events at Power Station of Art.

## YUAN Space

**When:** 11 am to 5 pm, March 8 to April 5 except Mondays

**Where:** B20 Jiaming Center, 27 Dong sanhuanBei Lu, Chaoyang District

**Entry:** Free

# String quartet pays tribute to Mozart

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

Germany's Leipzig String Quartet, one of the world's most famous string quartets, is performing a concert inspired by Mozart at the National Grand Theater on May 15.

Leipzig is home to the world's oldest municipal symphony orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, founded more than 250 years ago. Three of the quartet's members come from the city's orchestra.

Since its founding in 1988, the Leipzig String Quartet has won the 1991 International ARD Munich competition and the Busch and Siemens prizes. It is recog-



Leipzig String Quartet Cyol.com Photo

nized as one of the most authoritative artistic heritage groups in Europe.

In North America, the group has performed at the Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall's quartet series in the Weill Recital Hall, the 92nd St. Y,

The Frick Collection, Wolf Trap and the Library of Congress.

The quartet was also one of the initiators of the 1996 and 1997 Beethoven Quartet Cycle, offered jointly with five other quartets as a sign of European friendship in more than 15 European cities.

Its 90 recordings include the complete works of Brahms, Mozart, Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Schubert and the complete Second Viennese School. The Leipzig String Quartet has been nominated twice for Cannes Classical Award, and won the ECHO-Klassik Award in 1999, 2000, 2003, 2008 and 2012.

The theater has opened online booking for music fans in the capital.

## Program:

- String Quartet No.19 in C major, K.465, "Dissonance," by Mozart
- String Quartet No.4 in C minor, Op.18, No.4, by Beethoven
- Moz-Art la Mozart for 2 Violins, by Alfred Schnittke
- String Quartet No.3 in D major, Op.44, No.1, by Mendelssohn

## National Grand Theater

**When:** May 15

**Where:** 2 Xi Chang'anJie, Xicheng District

**Entry:** 80-280 yuan

**Web:** [www.chncpa.org/ycgp/jmxx/2014-22740.shtml](http://www.chncpa.org/ycgp/jmxx/2014-22740.shtml)



# Irish embassy celebrates country's national day

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

The National Day of Ireland, St. Patrick's Day, is celebrated by Irish all over the world in big annual gatherings.

The Embassy of Ireland, Irish Cultural Center and Ireland Literature Exchange's month of concerts, exhibitions, lectures, reading parties, balls and discussions are wrapping up today and tomorrow with an International Irish Studies Conference held at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU).

Professor Wang Zhanpeng from the Irish Studies Center at BFSU will be one of the speakers.

Wang is one of the few professors studying the country at a Chinese research institution. "With how China has gained from participating in globalization, we think studying Ireland a meaningful work worth pursuing," he said.

The Irish Studies Center of BFSU was founded in 2007 and began accepting students for master's degrees in Irish Studies with a focus on Irish culture or political economy. The center also teaches Irish language.

The center organized the first China International Irish Studies Conference in 2007, the "China and Ireland" International Conference to celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations in 2009



People celebrate St. Patrick's Day on the street in Ireland.

CFP Photo

and a series of scholarly and cultural activities at the China-Ireland relationship forum.

Famous Irish writers Paddy Bushe,

Desmond Egan, Hugo Hamilton, Sebastian Barry, Colm Tóibín and Dermot Bolger visited the center earlier in the month to speak with students.

**When:** March 28 to 29

**Where:** Beijing Foreign Studies University, 2 Xisanhuan Bei Lu, Haidian District

**Entry:** Free

# Mexican ambassador talks tri-lateral relations with China, US

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

China is becoming one of the top destinations for Mexico's automobile exports.

The Mexican version of *The Economist* reported on March 17 that the country's auto shipments to Africa and Asia are growing, and that China had overtaken Argentina and Columbia to enter the Top 5 destinations.

The American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China) invited Mexican Ambassador Julian Ventura to discuss tri-lateral economic relations between China, the US and Mexico this month.

Ventura explained the foundations of the trade relationship and possibilities for future growth.

Although Mexico has been slow to respond to China's entrance into the global market, the US-Mexico-China trilateral relationship provides many opportunities for economic growth. As



Julian Ventura

AmCham China Photo

a Pacific-rim economies, the three countries can learn from each others' strong points and close the gap to pursue mutual benefit in investment and trade, he said.

China and Mexico have had a strong political relationship since the

1970s that initially centered on third-world politics.

"Following China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), there was a perception that Mexico was falling behind. Initially, Mexico bore the brunt of shifting international trade pat-

terns, because of an economic and legal framework that could not adjust," Ventura said.

Mexico's focus on bilateral trade with China is increased agricultural exports, he said. The country is developing a new financial agenda and inter-governmental environment more conducive to business.

Ventura also said that Mexico's North American border was a great asset for all three countries.

"It presents an opportunity for Chinese investment, in part because of its proximity to the US, its large workforce and our abundance of national resources," Ventura said. "Further deepening North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and promoting free trade throughout the North American region is also very important."

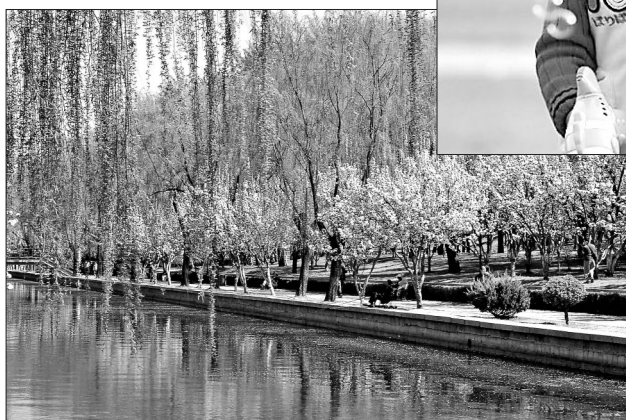
"Investment by Chinese subsidiary companies in Mexico has also helped develop the North American Asia Pacific Rim. Investment has grown, but is still below its potential."



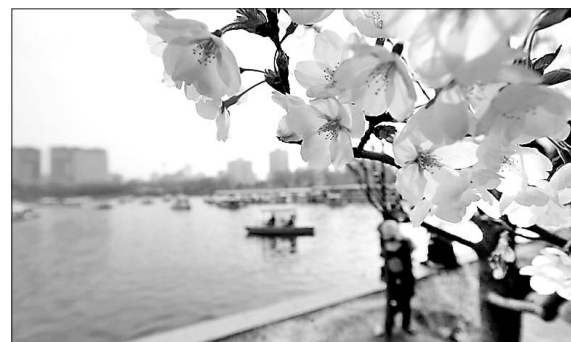
# Colors of spring in Beijing



Spring is one of the most beautiful seasons.



CFP Photos



Spring view at Yuyuantan Park

By **LIU XIAOCHEN**  
*Beijing Today Staff*

The Qingming Festival is coming, and with it the season for spring outings and flower watching. The warm weather is also ideal for outdoor sports: exercise can be a mood booster after long hours at the office.

Beijing has many beautiful urban parks, royal gardens and suburban scenic areas that can make for a pleasant and relaxing weekend. The less known parks draw fewer visitors and make for a more enjoyable outing.

## Yuyuantan Park

Located in the urban center, Yuyuantan Park is easily accessed from most parts of the city. The park is vast and includes a small forest, a lake and beautiful natural scenery.

Yuyuantan Park also holds the capital's best Cherry Blossom Festival every spring.

Nearly 2,000 cherry blossoms trees will come awake during the next few days. The park has more than 20 species of cherry trees. At present, most of the flowers are in an early stage of development. Most will bloom when the average temperature reaches 12 degrees.

**When:** Late March to late April

**Where:** Yuyuantan Park, 10 Xisanhuan Zhong Lu, Haidian District

**Entry:** 10 yuan

## Baihua Mountain

Located in Mentougou District, Baihua Mountain National Nature Reserve offers a springtime view of green grass and colorful flowers.

Baihua Mountain is known for its diverse flora. The park has different flowers blooming three seasons of the year. Its meadow near

the peak of Mt. Yagao includes 40 species of grass and many wildflowers.

The park also includes peach and apricot blossoms, lilacs, red azaleas and Siberian crabapples growing throughout its natural secondary forest and shrubby grassland. The array of colors is amazing

in early spring.

**When:** Daily, 8 am-6 pm

**Where:** Baihua Mountain, Qingshui Town, Mentougou District

**Entry:** 60 yuan

## Xishan National Forest Park

Xishan National Forest Park is located in the western suburbs of Beijing and stretches across the districts of Haidian, Shijingshan and Mentougou. It is one of the most important suburban scenic areas, and is also the city's nearest national forest.

The mountain's seasonal scenery has been famous for several years.

As early as the Qing Dynasty, the mountain was a recreational destination for peach and apricot blossom viewing. After the civil war, the mountain's peach and apricot orchards were expanded to create even more beautiful scenery.

In early March, pink and white flowers cover the whole mountain, occasionally peeking out between pine and cypress branches. The flowering period can last 20 days.

**When:** Everyday

**Where:** Xishan National Forest Park, 6 Xiangshan Hanhe Lu, Haidian District

**Entry:** 10 yuan

## World Flower Wonderland Park

Indoor flower are an option for people who don't like the outdoors. Beijing World Flower Wonderland Park is located on North Fourth Ring Road. It's easy to reach, and is one of the city's largest botanical gardens.

The park has exotic flowers, rare herbs and trees and classical gardens. It combines tourism, science, shopping and dining in one activity space.

World Flower Wonderland Park's landscape contains seven greenhouses and 15 garden squares. The greenhouses are home to many kinds of plants, and the outdoor landscape has unique gardens, plazas and exotic architecture that combine world flower culture and beautiful landscape art.

**When:** Daily, 8 am-6 pm

**Where:** Beijing World Flower Wonderland Park, 235 Nansihuan Zhong Lu, Fengtai District

**Entry:** 50 yuan



## Art



### Suspending: Solo exhibition of Ma Yongfeng

After several years in the field of social intervention, installation and participatory practice, Ma Yongfeng returns to photography with his Suspending series at Jiali Gallery.

The collection is an interesting and pivotal phase in his artistic expression, bridging Chinese traditional culture with modernity in a discreet but transformative way.

**Where:** Jiali Gallery, 4 Beijixiang Hutong, Dongcheng District (one hutong south of Xiang'er Hutong)

**When:** Through April 26, 9 am-midnight

**Webs:** jialigallery.com

**Tel:** 8402 5613

### All in Ruins: Qiu Fei's solo exhibition

Withered wood can spring back to life without any help from human beings. It symbolizes the eternal power of nature, surpassing gorgeous yet temporary blossoms.

In Chinese painting, withered trees offer a sense of strength based on visual and conceptual ambiguity. They imply hope for new life against death and desolation. Withered wood symbolizes eternity instead of an end with its weather-beaten trunks.

Artist Qiu Fei focuses on the constant communication between inner self and the landscape in his works. A peaceful mentality of acceptance shines in his work. His paintings do not betray a hint of obvious hope.

**Where:** Unit 118, Beijing Kerry Centre Mall, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

**When:** Through May 3, 10 am-10 pm

**Web:** Zhonggallery.com

**Tel:** 8529 6090



## Culture



### 6-step Buddhist retreat

Are you be interested in learning some basic Chinese Buddhism and meditation in a relaxing natural environment? How about doing some exercises and eating healthy vegetarian food?

The weekend retreat is free, including pick-up and transportation services from the subway station.

**When:** March 28-30

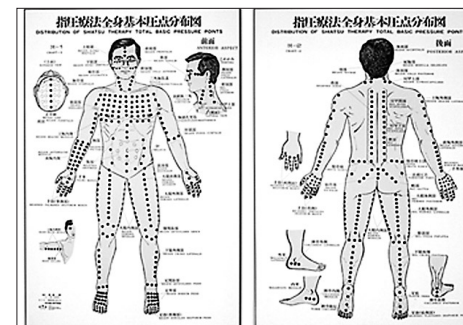
**Price:** Free

**Tel:** 13910518743

**Website:** sixstepretreats.com/retreat-registration-form/

**Email:** info@sixstepretreats.com

**Free Shiatsu seminar**



Shiatsu is a Japanese therapeutic massage that applies pressure to specific trigger points. It begins with a physical assessment then systematically moves along the body's meridians. The recipient remains fully clothed throughout the relaxing experience. Aromatherapy can also be included when desired.

Treatment uses a combination of massage, stretches and energy rebalancing to affect the body on a physical and emotional level.

List the common pains you experience every day and learn some tips to effectively relieve them by yourself!

**Where:** Beijing Dongwen TCM Clinic, No. 8 Suite 107, Xiaoyun Li, Chaoyang District

**When:** April 1, 6:30-8 pm

**Price:** Free

**Email:** dywjmedical@gmail.com

## Music



### Bruno Mars 2014 Beijing Concert

Bruno Mars is a critically acclaimed singer, songwriter, producer and musician. The 14-time Grammy Award nominee and winner has sold more than 115 million singles worldwide.

His latest album, *Unorthodox Jukebox*, and his debut album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*, have a combined certification of 60 times platinum worldwide.

Mars scored his first five "Hot 100" top songs faster than any male singer

since Elvis Presley. As a singer, songwriter and producer, Mars has an impressive catalog of 22 "Hot 100" hits.

Bruno Mars and his eight-piece band The Hooligans are on a sold-out world arena tour.

**Where:** MasterCard Center, 12 Xicui Lu, Xicheng District

**When:** April 5, 8-10 pm

**Price:** 380-1,680 yuan

**Web:** gettickets.cn



### The Avengers of Music

The Avengers of Music are a band of super-talents, assembled to save China from its boring nights without good music. When bandmates Steven McKinney (Captain America), Cian Rance (Iron Man), Fernando Mesel (Thor) and Matt Spence (Hulk) take center stage, they deliver the ultimate musical performance.

The musical heroes rescue citizens with their entertaining songs and overflowing charisma. When this super band is on the job, music is always avenged! Come "get saved" by the Avengers of Music.

**Where:** MVA Bar & Cafe, 13 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

**When:** March 29, 10 pm-2 am

**Price:** Free

**Tel:** 13910228025

**Web:** douban.com/host/vabar/

## Stage



### NCPA's Production of Verdi's La Traviata

*La Traviata* is the last part of "Popular Trilogy" by Verdi, the Italian romanticist composer. It's also one of the best-selling classical works in opera history. The original version of the story is from Dumas Fils' famous novel *Lady of the Camellias*.

The opera consists of three acts. It was first performed in Teatro La

Fenice in 1853. After further adaptation, it became one of the most popular works in opera houses around the world. Its many arias with elegant melodies enjoy great popularity.

It has the most famous selections among all of Verdi's work, even competing with Bizet's *Carmen*. Dumas Fils once said, "Fifty years from now, people may not remember my

novel, but Verdi made it immortal."

**Where:** National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

**When:** April 10-12, 7:30-10 pm

**Tel:** 18600208126

**Price:** 100-680 yuan



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